

Green-veined White (Pieris napi) ovipositing on parsley piert (Aphanes arvensis)

In early June, 1990, whilst walking along a farm track at Steeple Ashton in Wiltshire, I became aware in the distance of a "white" butterfly which according to its progression I considered to be searching for suitable sites for ovipositing. When the distance between us had closed sufficiently, I was able to determine that the insect was a Green-veined White and that she was in fact going through the motions of egg-laying. What intrigued me was that she carefully selected at intervals a leaf of her choice on various plants of parsley piert. There was no deviation in her choice of pabulum and there were no cruciferous plants on this particular track. I marked two of the sites which she had visited and discovered a single egg under each leaf. As the plants were very prostrate this was a "hands and knees" job. In this short time she had disappeared.

Unfortunately, I was there to investigate how some of our cattle had gained access into the neighbour's cornfield and I did not take the ova to rear them through on this particular pabulum. As far as I am aware, the Green-veined White is only associated with cruciferous plants. *Aphanes arvensis* is a member of the Rosaceae and would seem to be an unlikely or unexpected foodplant.— M.H. SMITH, 42 Bellefield Crescent, Trowbridge, Wilts.

Suicidal behaviour in invertebrates

A tendency for suicidal behaviour is not restricted to lepidoptera (J. Koryszko, *Ent. Rec.* 103: 118). On 22.v.1991, I was sitting outside a taverna in Elounda, Crete. As the cup of hot water arrived, plus tea bag, three flies (resembling house flies, *Musca* species) simultaneously dived into the cup and instantly died.— DENIS TOWNSEND, 8 Cornwall House, Ravendale Drive, Lincoln LN2 2BU.

A further record of *Nascia ciliaris* Hb. (Lep.: Pyralidae) in Hampshire

Subsequent to Mr P.M. Pott's note regarding the distribution of this local pyralid in Hampshire (*Ent. Rec.* 102: 191) it may be of interest to record the capture at MV of a single male specimen at West Wood, Winchester, Hampshire on the night of 23rd May 1989 by Mr S. Swift when out trapping together. Whilst this does not prove the existence of a colony, further investigation would seem warranted. Our thanks to Mr Barry Goater for his positive verification of the specimen captured.— J.W. PHILLIPS, 16 Grove Road, Havant, Hants PO9 1AR.

***Xylena vetusta* Hb., the Red Sword-grass (Lep.: Noctuidae) in south Essex in December 1990.**

On the night of 29.xii.1990, I was delighted to find a specimen of this species inside my Robinson trap. The capture of this insect on a cold evening in late December is made more surprising as this is my only record of *vetusta* in 16 years of almost continuous recording. My father, A.J.

Dewick, has taken this species here on a few occasions, but not since 1982.

Skinner (*Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles*, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1984) states that *vetusta* is "resident, reinforced in southern England by immigration." In view of the extreme scarcity of this species here, perhaps it is likely that my specimen had arrived with other immigrants during the autumn and then hibernated.— S. DEWICK, Curry Farm, Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex.

Early sightings of *Macroglossum stellatarum* L. in east Sussex

At an amphibians open day at Woods Hill in April 1991, I was told of two early sightings of *Macroglossum stellatarum*. The first was seen on 18.iv.1991 on a sunny wall outside the Black Horse pub in Lewes. Later on the same day, my informant saw one hovering by a patch of valerian flowers in his garden on the other side of Lewes.— DENNIS DEY, 26 Manor Avenue, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8NG.

A further Welsh record of *Hadrognathus longipalpis* (Mulsant & Rey) (Col.: Staphylinidae)

Hadrognathus longipalpis was recently added to the British list by Lott (1989). It is a distinctive omaliine staphylinid with more recently recognised populations in south Wales (Holmes, Boyce and Reed, 1990).

Lott (op. cit.) first located *H. longipalpis* in Cumbria, whilst the Welsh records result from the Welsh Peatland Invertebrate Survey of the Nature Conservancy as was. This survey found *H. longipalpis* in the Watsonian vice-counties of Carmarthen, Glamorgan and Brecon.

In Europe, *H. longipalpis* is more or less montane, largely within influence of Atlantic Ocean-influenced weather systems. All of the Welsh records to date show *H. longipalpis* between 5 and 330 metres altitude, demonstrating that in the principality, it is not exclusively montane.

I can now add a further record for the Brecon Beacons when I encountered a specimen in SO 02 (in the Llanfrynach area) on 13.iv.1991 at 661m O.D. The specimen was found in damp moss amongst *Juncus inflexus* L. on a grazed hillside during a substantial survey of beetles in the area, with two people working simultaneously. It seems therefore that *H. longipalpis* is genuinely local at the site.

It appears that the spread of *H. longipalpis* in western Britain is both mildly explosive and continuing, and is a good example of rapid colonisation of a "natural" habitat. The establishment and colonisation-rate of *H. longipalpis* has few recent parallels in the British fauna; its spread appears dramatically faster than *Leistus rufomarginatus* (Duftschmid) (Col.: Carabidae) and it may well compare with that of the Collared Dove in the British avifauna. It will be interesting to see how far north *H. longipalpis* reaches. What is clear is that perhaps by specialisation rather than direct competition, *H. longipalpis* has created a niche for itself in a long established biological system.